Hike in administered prices of essential commodities

793. SHRI O. P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there has been steep hike in the administered prices of cooking oils, pulses of all varieties including Kabuli chana, washing soaps, basmati tota, deshi ghee, machine made bisculits etc, during 1994 and in 1995.

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) the prices of these items from 1st January, 1994 to date, monthwise and how do these compare with the prices in the preceding three years; and

(d) the steps taken to bring down the prices?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI BUTA SINGH): (a) and (b) The items ilke cooking oils, pulses of all varieties including Kabuli chana, washing soaps basmati tota, deshi ghee, machine made biscuits etc. are not covered under the purview of administered prices.

(c) A statement showing the wholesale price indices of the above items from 1st January, 1994 to 25th February, 1995 alongwith the comparative position in the preceding three years is given at Annexure. (*See* Appendix 173, Annexure No. 11).

(d) The Government has accorded the highest priority for controlling the prices of essential commodities and also to augmenting their supplies. Towards this end, efforts are being made to increase their indigenous production through various schemes. Further, to supplement their availability, the essential commodities like pulses, palmolein and vegetable oils, sugar etc. are being imported in the most desired quantity. The essential commodities like rice, wheat, sugar, imported edible oil, kerosene and soft coke are being supplied through Public Distribuion System at below market price. State Governments/UT Administrations have been requested to supply additional items like pulses, exercise books etc. through their retail outlets. A close watch is being kept on their prices their prices and availability in the market on regular basis and strict actions are being taken against the blackmarketeers, hoarders and those indulging in unfair trade practices under the Essential Commodities Act and Prevention of Black Marketing Act etc.

Committee to recommend charges in standards of weighs and easures Rules, 1977

794. PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have constituted a committee to examine, review and make suitable recommendations to bring about changes in the provisions of the Standards of Weights and Measures *(Packaged Commodities) Rules, 1977;*

(b) if so, whether the committee has started working;

(c) whether the committee has made any recommendations and if so, the details thereof and the action taken thereon; and

(d) what are the other measures that Government propose to take to safeguard the interests of the consumers at large?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI BUTA SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Yes, Sir. On the basis of the recommendations of the Committee, the Standards of Weights and Measures (Packaged Commodities) Rules 1977 have been amended three tims during 1994-95.